

REMARKS

Upon entry of the instant amendment, claims 16-21 will remain pending in the present application.

In the instant amendment, claims 1-15 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Claims 4-6 have been rewritten in an independent form as new claims 16-18, while also incorporating the features of claim 1. New claims 19-20 have been added and are based upon claims 2-3, respectively. Further, claim 3 also has been rewritten in an independent form as new claim 21, while also incorporating all of the limitations of the base claim and the intervening claim (i.e., claims 1 and 2). Thus, the instant amendments made herein to the claims do not incorporate new matter into the application as originally filed.

Further, the instant amendments do not raise substantial new issues for the Examiner's consideration and require no further search on the Examiner's part. At the same time, the instant amendments put the pending claims in condition for allowance and into a more proper format for issuance in a United States patent, by overcoming all outstanding rejections and objections of record.

Accordingly, proper consideration of each of the pending claims (i.e., claims 16-21) is respectfully requested at present, as is entry of the present amendment.

Allowable Subject Matter

At pages 6-7 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicates that claims 4-6 have been objected to as being dependant upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In the present amendment, claim 4-6 have been rewritten as new claims 16-18 by incorporating all the limitations of claim 1 therein. Concurrently, claims 4-6 have been cancelled.

Therefore, the objection to claims 4-6 have been rendered moot.

Further, new claims 19 and 20 depend from the allowable claim 16, 17 or 18.

Accordingly, it is submitted that each of new claims 16-20 are now in condition for allowance.

Double-Patenting

At page 2 of the Office Action, claims 1-3 are provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 1 of co-pending Application No. 10/715,473.

Claims 1-3 have been canceled. Further, claim 3 has been rewritten as new independent claim 21 by incorporating all of the limitations of the base claim and the intervening claim (i.e. claims 1 and 2).

Further, submitted concurrently herewith is a Terminal Disclaimer with regard to application no. 10/715,473.

Accordingly, this rejection has been rendered moot, and claim 21 is now in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC § 102 and § 103

On pages 3-7 of the Office Action, claims 1-2 and 9-14 have been rejected under 35 USC § 102 or § 103.

As explained above, claims 1-2 and 9-14 have been canceled. Thus, each of these rejections has been rendered moot.

CONCLUSION

Based upon the amendments and remarks presented herein, the Examiner is respectfully requested to issue a Notice of Allowance clearly indicating that each of the pending claims 16-21 are allowed under the provisions of Title 35 of the United States Code.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Gerald M. Murphy, Jr. (Reg. No. 28,977) at the telephone number below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

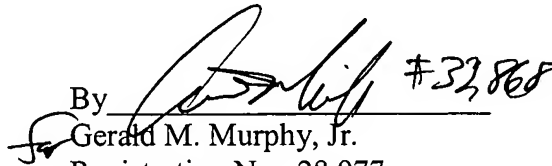
Application No. 10/825,303
Amendment dated June 26, 2006
After Final Office Action of March 24, 2006

Docket No.: 0171-1056P

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: June 26, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment: Terminal Disclaimer